MARVEL

20

LGY#263

PLUS! A STORY GUEST-STARRING **THE SPIRIT RIDER** BY JUDD, BEYALE & VALENZA

PERCY · NIETO · VALENZA

GHOST RIDER

MARVEL STUDIOS

THE MARVELS

NOW PLAYING IN THEATERS

When innocent blood is spilled, a ***Spirit of Vengeance*** is born, and **JOHNNY BLAZE** finds himself transformed!

Marvel Comics presents...

GHOST RIDER

"The Kids Are All Wrong"

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"Kill the Blue-Eyed Man"

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PREVIOUSLY...

Talia Warroad was a former S.H.I.E.L.D. and F.B.I. agent with an expertise in the occult and the supernatural. Assigned to hunt down the Ghost Rider, Warroad was forced to team up with her original target. Eventually, this led to a romantic relationship with the Rider's human host, Johnny Blaze!

But once upon a time, Talia was just another troubled teen with an interest in the occult and a dangerous crush. Seeking to understand her mystic abilities, Talia fell under the sway of the Cult of Mephisto and its leader, Stefan Skaar. And though her parents sought Doctor Strange's help, he found that Talia had stepped farther into the darkness than he had realized.

Now Talia has discovered that Stefan is still whispering in the ears of wayward children, and she knows that, unless she and the Rider do something, her past will play out again on a much more horrific scale...

KIDS.

HELLISH PARK

IT WAS ALWAYS KIDS.

STEFAN WAS ENLISTING THEM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY...

...THE SAME WAY HE HAD ENLISTED ME.

KLK

SCREEEE

I WAS 13 AT THE TIME--NO LONGER A GIRL, BUT NOT A WOMAN.

IN THAT IN-BETWEEN TIME, YOU DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, SO IT'S EASY TO GET LOST.

HE TURNED US AGAINST OUR PARENTS.

HE PROMISED US ETERNAL YOUTH AND TERRIBLE POWER...

CAMP ABADDON EST. 1990

...AS PART OF THE CULT OF MEPHISTO.

Clothing

JOHNNY AND I ALWAYS SEEM TO BE A FEW DAYS BEHIND HIM.

BUT THIS LATEST MISSION MIGHT BE THE TROUBLE THAT BRINGS US TO HIS DOORSTEP.

RUMM

THEY COME AT NIGHT.

THEY KEEP THEIR HEADLIGHTS OFF, AND THEY DON'T CLOSE THEIR DOORS.

THEY SPEAK IN WHISPERS AND STEP SOFTLY.

BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO WAKE UP THE CHILD.

THE PARENTS HAVE SUPPOSEDLY TRIED EVERYTHING...

...FROM COUNSELING TO MEDICATION TO JUVIE.

THE CHILD IS IN TROUBLE WITH SCHOOL, WITH DRUGS, WITH SEX, WITH VANDALISM OR FIGHTING OR WHATEVER.

THIS, THEY BELIEVE, IS THEIR LAST RESORT.

A BOARDING SCHOOL THAT IS A KIND OF PRISON.

A PLACE FAR FROM HOME THAT PROMISES A NEW BEGINNING.

DON'T WORRY, KID...

...YOU'RE AMONG FRIENDS.

COLORADO.

MIDDLE OF @#$% NOWHERE.

SURE WE'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE, TALIA?

SURE AS HELL.

BETTER CUT THE ENGINE.

WE'LL WALK FROM HERE, JOHNNY.

SO...FIRST LOVES CUT DEEP. TELL ME MORE ABOUT STEFAN.

PLEASE DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE JEALOUS.

SO JEALOUS. MY TANK IS TOPPED OFF WITH JEALOUSY.

KIDDING.

DON'T MAKE ME GUT YOU.

I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST.

AND WHAT *YOU'RE* UP AGAINST.

LOOK.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL FOR TROUBLED YOUTH.

PARENTS SEND THEIR KIDS HERE. KIDS THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH.

YOU DIDN'T ANSWER MY QUESTION.

I WAS DRAWN TO STEFAN FOR THE SAME REASON I'M DRAWN TO YOU, I GUESS.

MOST PEOPLE LIVE IN DENIAL OF THE DARKNESS THAT SURROUNDS THEM.

IT'S NICE TO BE AROUND SOMEONE WHO SPEAKS YOUR LANGUAGE.

THE PAST.

WHAT ABOUT THIS ONE?

ILLNESS. THAT ONE MAKES PEOPLE SICK.

AND?

AND...THE SIZE AND COLOR OF THE CIPHER DETERMINE HOW SICK THEY GET.

A SMALL YELLOW ONE-- MIGHT MAKE THEM PUKE FOR A FEW HOURS.

A MEDIUM RED ONE-- WILL KNOCK THEM OUT FOR DAYS WITH A 105-DEGREE FEVER.

A BIG BLACK ONE-- MIGHT MAKE THEM SPROUT A FEW TUMORS.

OKAY. HERE'S ANOTHER.

DEATH.

THAT'S DEATH.

DRAW IT ON SOMEBODY'S SHIRT OR PILLOW OR WHATEVER.

AND THEY'RE DEAD.

YOU GET AN A.

SIGH THIS IS SO MUCH BETTER THAN GOING TO SCHOOL WITH THE NORMALS.

I'M LEARNING @#$% THAT ACTUALLY MATTERS.

WHAT'S WRONG? STEFAN?

DO YOU HEAR SOMETHING?

COME ON.

WHERE WE GOING?

TO RAISE A LITTLE HELL.

"DID YOU LOVE HIM?"

I WAS OBSESSED WITH HIM. IS THAT THE SAME THING?

HOLD UP.

I CAN SENSE SOMETHING JUST AHEAD...

A BLOOD WALL.

IT CAN KEEP OUT DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE, DEPENDING ON HOW YOU MANIFEST IT.

SO WHO'S IT KEEPING OUT?

US. ADULTS. OLD PEOPLE.

I'M NOT AN OLD. YOU'RE AN OLD.

ANYWAY, I'M SURE IT WON'T STOP THE RIDER. I'LL JUST FIRE UP, AND--

NO. WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THERE BEFORE WE LET THE RIDER OFF THE LEASH. HE'S TOO DANGEROUS.

THEN WHAT DO WE DO?

I GOT AN IDEA.

NOT SURE HOW I FEEL ABOUT THIS.

SINCE WHEN HAVE YOU EVER TURNED ME DOWN?

IT'S NOT JUST THAT WE'RE A QUARTER MILE FROM YOUR EX-BOYFRIEND'S FORTRESS...

...IT'S THE WHOLE IDEA OF *MAKING A BABY.*

IT'S NOT A BABY. IT'S A *MOONCHILD.*

WHEN THE MOON IS FULL, IT'S MIRRORING THE SUN.

ALL THAT HEAT MIXED WITH ALL THAT COLD, ALL THAT LIGHT MIXED WITH ALL THOSE SHADOWS, ALL THAT MAGMA MIXED WITH ALL THAT STONE...

...MAKES A DOUBLING OF OURSELVES POSSIBLE.

A REFLECTION.

SO I'LL BE YOUR MOON.

AND YOU BE MY SUN.

CHOOM!!!

TALIA?

"YOUR DAUGHTER IS SPECIAL, MR. AND MRS. WARROAD."

BUT SHE IS ALSO UNDER THE THRALL OF SOME VERY DARK FORCES.

THE PAST.
THE WARROAD RESIDENCE.

SHE'S BEEN IN TUNE WITH THEM LONG ENOUGH THAT YOUR HOUSE HAS BEEN STAINED.

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT THE HOUSE, DOCTOR STRANGE.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY DAUGHTER. I'M WORRIED ABOUT TALIA.

BOTH SHE--AND THIS PLACE--REQUIRE CORRECTION.

A CLEANING.

-GASP!-

YOU RUINED HER LIFE WITH YOUR CONSTANT PESTERING!

NO...

YOU NEVER ACCEPTED HER FOR WHO SHE WAS!

YOU WISHED YOU HAD A DIFFERENT DAUGHTER!

NO. NO, THAT'S NOT TRUE!

YOU DESERVE...

GLRP

...TO DIE!

DZZZ

YOU HATE HER, SO SHE HATES YOU!

NO, NO! PLEASE STOP!

LET'S HURRY ALONG NOW.

WE DON'T NEED ANY MORE CONVINCING!

TRY TO ENJOY YOUR TIME AWAY.

I'LL BE IN TOUCH ABOUT WHAT I DISCOVER...

...INCLUDING TALIA'S WHEREABOUTS.

BUT THIS MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME.

THE ANGER AND EVIL OF MEPHISTO HAVE SOAKED INTO THE VERY TIMBERS OF THIS PLACE.

"I'M FEELING A LITTLE WEIRD ABOUT THIS ONE, TALIA."

AND AS A GUY WHO TURNS INTO A FLAMING SKELETON, I'VE GOT A PRETTY HIGH THRESHOLD FOR WEIRD.

WHEN I THINK OF MAKING A CHILD...I'M SORRY, BUT I THINK OF *LOVE.*

THIS FEELS COLD. AND MAYBE A LITTLE RECKLESS.

IT'S ALWAYS CRUEL AND RECKLESS TO MAKE A CHILD.

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY POLLYANNA BULL@#$%.

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT?

YEAH. I DO. LOOK AROUND.

THIS WORLD IS ONE BIG @#$%& HORROR SHOW.

BEING BORN IS A FORM OF PUNISHMENT. RAISING A CHILD IS A KIND OF TORTURE.

I SEE IT DIFFERENTLY.

NO BULL. I GOT A LOT OF LOVE GROWING UP.

YOUR MOTHER ABANDONED YOU. YOUR FATHER DIED. CRASH DIED. THAT SOUNDS LIKE A LONG BLACK HIGHWAY OF PAIN TO ME.

YEAH, BUT THE LOVE I GOT ALONG THE WAY-- IT WAS WORTH THE PAIN.

YOU DON'T KNOW!

IF I DON'T...

"...IT'S BECAUSE YOU'VE NEVER TOLD ME."

WHERE ARE WE GOING, STEFAN?

WHEREVER THE NIGHT TAKES US.

LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY'S IN TROUBLE.

LET'S CHECK IT OUT.

WAIT...

POLICE

...I RECOGNIZE THAT CAR.

MOM! DAD!

NO!

SKIK

THOSE ARE MY PARENTS!

COME ON.

IT'S GONNA BE ALL RIGHT.

I GOT YOU.

"I DID WHAT EVERY TEENAGER DOES.

"I WISHED MY PARENTS WOULD DIE.

"BUT IN MY CASE, THEY ACTUALLY DID.

"BECAUSE OF STEFAN, YEAH. BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF ME.

"BECAUSE I FOLLOWED HIM. BECAUSE HE WANTED ME ALL TO HIMSELF."

SOME SAY THE MISTAKES YOU MAKE AS A TEENAGER ARE NECESSARY.

YOU LEARN FROM THEM.

WELL, HERE'S WHAT I'VE LEARNED...

...NEVER GIVE TOO MUCH OF A @#$% ABOUT ANYONE.

BECAUSE WE'RE ALL GOING TO END UP AS ROADKILL.

LET'S GO, BUDDY.

I'M ATTUNED TO THE MOONCHILD. I'LL SEE WHAT IT SEES.

CAN YOU FEEL WHAT IT FEELS?

IT DOESN'T *FEEL* ANYTHING ANY MORE THAN YOUR HAND DOES.

IT'S JUST AN EXTENSION OF US.

YOU GAVE IT POWER. I GIVE IT GUIDANCE.

DON'T GO GETTING SENTIMENTAL...

...WHEN THIS IS STRICTLY BUSINESS.

"WE'LL SEND IT IN TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE THAT SCHOOL.

"WE'LL GET THOSE KIDS FREE OF STEFAN.

"AND THEN THE RIDER WILL BRING THE WALLS OF THE PLACE CRASHING DOWN ON HIM."

TO BE CONCLUDED!

TRUE LOVE'S

BAROOMM

40 MILES OUTSIDE OF ALBUQUERQUE.

WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING SUCH EVIL?! WE'RE *SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE!*

VENGEANCE AND WANTON MURDER ARE NOT THE SAME, *KUSHALA.* HE CANNOT BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVENTS THAT HAPPENED A CENTURY AGO.

WHAM

GET OUT!

YOU'RE NOT ESCAPING THIS TIME!

AAAH!

FWING

HUAH!

FWING-ING-ING-ING

WHRIZZ

<PORTAL OPEN.>*

*TRANSLATED FROM APACHE. --DS

CRACK

THIS DOESN'T CONCERN YOU!

IT DOES NOW.

CRIMSON BANDS OF CYTTORAK!

SHALL WE BURN IN THIS ETERNAL STALEMATE, OR WOULD YOU CARE TO EXPLAIN?

THAT MAN YOU ALLOWED TO ESCAPE IS AT THE END OF A VERY LONG STORY...AND IT'S GOING TO BE A TRAGEDY.

1878. 40 MILES OUTSIDE OF ALBUQUERQUE.

"MOST FOLKS WOULD THINK KILLING THE SOLDIERS RESPONSIBLE FOR MURDERING EVERYONE IN YOUR VILLAGE WOULD FEEL GOOD. NOT FOR ME. I DON'T LIKE VIOLENCE.

"BUT THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE INSIDE ME MAKES ME REALLY GOOD AT IT.

"I HEARD ABOUT A MAN WHO WAS SAID TO HAVE POWERFUL MEDICINE.

"I TOLD HIM MY STORY. IF *ANYONE* COULD HELP ME BE RID OF MY DEMON...

"...MY *DEMONS*... IT WOULD BE HIM.

"HE AGREED TO HELP. SENT ME TO THE FOREST TO GATHER SUPPLIES FOR THE CEREMONY AT DAWN.

"BUT WHILE I WAS GONE...

WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?

CLICK

BLAM

"...THE MAN FROM THE BLUE-EYED TRIBE KILLED A GOOD MAN, THE ONE MAN WHO COULD HELP ME...

"THE MEDICINE, MEANT TO BLESS A GOOD MAN IN LIFE...

"...INSTEAD CURSED A BAD MAN WITH ETERNAL *UN-LIFE.*

HNNGH...

UNNGH...

AAAARGH!!!

GASP

DIDN'T EVEN COVER YOUR TRACKS... IT'LL BE THE LAST LESSON YOU EVER LEARN.

"JUST AS I WAS ABOUT TO SERVE HIM SOME JUSTICE...

"...DOCTOR STRANGE PULLED ME TO YOUR TIME."*

AAAAAAHHH!

*AS SEEN IN *DOCTOR STRANGE AND THE SORCERERS SUPREME!* --DS

THAT WAS IN 1878. ANY MORTAL ALIVE THEN WOULD HAVE LONG SINCE SUCCUMBED. I HAVE SEEN HIS SINS, HE'S JUST A MAN.

MAY'VE BEEN 140 YEARS AGO, BUT FOR ME, IT'S ONLY BEEN SIX MONTHS. SAME BLUE EYES, SAME MEDICINE BAG, SAME TERRIFIED EXPRESSION. IT'S HIM.

OKAY, THIS IS WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN--WE FIND HIM, WE *TALK* TO HIM AND WE SEE IF HE IS WHO YOU SAY HE IS.

UNTIL THEN, HE STAYS UNHARMED.

LATER...

RUMBLE, RUMBLE, RUMBLE

REMEMBER, JUST USING OUR WORDS.

KNOCK

IT'S OPEN.

Y'ALL MAKE YOURSELVES AT HOME.

DIDN'T KNOW IF I'D SEE YOU AGAIN, BUT THOUGHT I'D SPRUCE UP THE PLACE JUST IN CASE.

CLICK

HOPE THE OTHER TWO DON'T MIND WAITING *OUTSIDE.*

SLAM

AAAAA AAAAAH!

SPIRIT BINDING IS ONLY ONE OF THE MANY THINGS I'VE HAD TIME TO LEARN ABOUT SINCE OUR LAST DATE, KOO-SHAWLA.

I KNOW THE SPIRITS OF THOSE YOU'VE KILLED FOLLOW YOU AROUND.

STUFF THAT OLD MAN LEFT BEHIND WAS USEFUL. FOUND WAYS TO CHANGE HOW I LOOK, HOW TO COUNTER THE ABILITIES OF SPIRITS...

MIGHT NEED MORE THAN OUR WORDS.

...EVEN LEARNED HOW TO MOVE ENERGY BETWEEN SPIRITS.

CLICK

AAAUGH!

NO!

BLAM

UNGH...

NOT SO BIG IN THE BRITCHES WITHOUT YOUR DEMONS, ARE YA?

I'M NOT *JUST* THE SPIRIT RIDER...

...I'M A SORCERER SUPREME.

MY SPIRIT TRAP?!

NO!

BLAM

WATCH THE SHOULDER ON THE WAY BACK IN, BIG GUY. STILL STINGS.

OOOF!

SMASH

KILLING ME WON'T BRING THE OLD MAN BACK. AND IT WON'T MAKE YOU FEEL ANY BETTER.

I DON'T APOLOGIZE VERY OFTEN, BUT I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO YOU.

YOU SHOWED UP WHEN IT COUNTED.

ANY TIME. AND ABOUT WHAT HE SAID...

...NOT BRINGING THE OLD MAN BACK AND YOU NOT FEELING ANY BETTER.

YEAH.

HE WAS HALF RIGHT.

THE END.

NEXT ISSUE

END OF THE ROAD!

The Cult of Mephisto is possessing the next generation of humanity! But even if the Spirit of Vengeance stops the Cult, what does that mean for the future of Ghost Rider? Could this be the end of an era?

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